

Angelic Revelation in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature

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1. Introduction

In modern scholarly discussion, the term “apocalypse” is reckoned among the most controversial expressions. Borrowed from the Christian title in the Book of the Revelation of John (Rev 1:1: Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) and used as a modern scholarly convention, the “apocalypse” started its career in the 19th century to become one of the major literary genres among the texts of the Tanach, the Christian Bible and in early Jewish literature.¹ Angelic beings, their functions, acts and speeches, are one of the most prominent and specific features within this genre. Currently, scholars tend to approach apocalyptic phenomena in a twofold way: while the still valuable standpoint of John J. Collins and others try to define the genre “apocalypse” by examining the contents of apocalyptic writings, other scholars deny that there ever existed the ancient genre of an “apocalypse” and restrict themselves to identifying literary conventions they call apocalyptic.² Notwithstanding this controversy of how to give a suitable description of the phenomenon, both approaches emphasize the central role of angels within their particular characterizations.

Suffice it to say here, how both lineages describe an “apocalypse” by referring to angelic beings. In his classical definition John J. Collins wrote that the “apocalypse” should be characterized as

*a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality ...*³

1 Cf. Schmidt, *Apokalyptik passim*.

2 See, e.g., Collins, *Imagination* 1-42, on the one hand and Wolter, *Apokalyptik* 178-179, on the other.

3 Collins, *Imagination* 5 (italics original).

Against this, Michael Wolter defines an “apocalypse” or apocalyptic writings as a figure of speech, when he summarizes:

‘Apokalyptisch’ nennen wir eine Redeform, die wir in solchen Texten vorfinden, deren Autoren die Leser zu Beginn darüber informieren (...), dass er ihnen etwas mitteilt, was menschlicher Erkenntnisfähigkeit bisher prinzipiell verschlossen war, weil es nur im Wege einer kognitiven Grenzüberschreitung zugänglich ist. [...] als apokalyptische Rezeptionsanweisungen identifiziert werden: [...] die Einführung eines Vermittlers, der aus der anderen Richtung kommt und dem Verfasser der Schrift Wissen transzendenter Provenienz verschafft (...).⁴

Obviously, both approaches refer to transcendent realities, as they were mediated to an earthly reality in apocalyptic writings. And among others, angels or angelic beings function as subjects of this process. To sum up, “apocalypticism” finds its goal in the revelation of otherworldly mysteries frequently mediated by angels or angelic beings.⁵ And it does not matter in this context, anyhow, if one interprets this revelation as referring to a literary genre (“apocalypse”: cf. Collins) or if one identifies in this revelation a sign for recipients to read the following text as influenced by apocalyptic hermeneutics (“Redeanweisung”: cf. Wolter).⁶

The following paragraphs try to highlight the mediatory function of angels or angelic beings within Jewish apocalyptic literature in Hellenistic-Roman times. And this examination will be restricted to two aspects of an angelic mediatory function: the coming of evil through the hand of the Watchers and the revelation of divine mysteries to the chosen ones. Here, another analogy to apocalyptic thinking becomes apparent, because apocalyptic writings in general tend to confront the evil inclination with a hope of the salvation for the righteous.

A good case in point is the “Book of Watchers” (1En 1-36), one of the very early traditions of apocalyptic writings, dating from 3rd or 2nd century BCE (see below). It is significant, because “the *Book of Watchers* draws a clear line of demarcation between the rebellious angels who fathered the giants and introduced humans to rejected forms of knowledge, on the one hand, and those angels which instructed Enoch concerning the nature and structure of the universe, on the other.”⁷ While

4 Wolter, *Apokalyptik* 181-182. Wolter’s emphasis on certain speech forms reminds of alternative approaches to apocalyptic writings that lay weight on the “apocalyptic discourse” (cf. Carey, *Introduction* 10, and DiTommaso, *Apocalypses I* 249).

5 See, recently, also Becker, *Apokalyptisches* 298: “Die Enthüllung transzendenter ‘Wissens’ hat dabei als einer der tragenden Bestandteile der apokalyptischen Tradition überhaupt zu gelten.”

6 For the recent discussions on “apocalypses” or “apocalyptic writings” and the questions of genre see the review article by DiTommaso, *Apocalypses I* 238-250.

7 Stuckenbruck, *Origins* 100.

texts from 1En 6-11, stemming from the 'Asa'el and Shemihazah traditions⁸ (see below), explain the Watchers' role negatively, the angel Uriel associates the positive function of an *angelus interpres* within the "Astronomical Book" (1En 72-82). Furthermore, the counterpart of angelic action is Enoch, the seventh in the genealogy of Gen 5 (v. 21-24), representing one central member of the antediluvian generations.⁹ Enoch was the first character to forgo death, and he lived for 365 years on earth, what associates the solar year. Therefore, it is a small wonder that Enoch as, e.g., a scribe (cf. 1En 12:4; Jub 4:17-26) and visionary (cf. 1En 12-16; 17-36) later on was identified with the "son of man" (1En 71:13-17), i.e., an angel.¹⁰ This means that angels in apocalyptic literature face a person who has a cosmological and hyper-individual meaning.¹¹

In general, three hermeneutical aspects should be taken into account: First of all, angels function as a revelatory medium within apocalyptic literature. Second, their function is placed between the spheres: heaven, earth and sometimes also the underworld. And, third, the angelic counterparts show both, an acquaintance with this-worldly and otherworldly realities. All in all and already at this point, it can be concluded that angelic revelation obviously associates a cosmological worldview that stems only from Hellenistic-Roman times.¹² The following investigation will examine, after scrutinizing the concepts of angels and their revelations in apocalyptic literature in general, the positive and negative consequences of angelic revelation. Further, the emerging rivalry between God and angels, or between monotheism and angelology, should be taken into account, when the revelatory function of angelic beings is in focus.¹³

2. Angelic Revelation in Apocalyptic Writings

The books by Peter Schäfer, Michael Mach and Donata Dörfel provide comprehensive overviews concerning angelic beings in ancient Jewish

8 Cf. VanderKam, Enoch 31-42.

9 Cf. VanderKam, Enoch 1-6; Hess, Enoch 508; Rowland, Enoch 301, and, recently, Raharimanantsoa, Mort 215-230.

10 Cf. Rowland, Enoch 302-303; Orlov, Counterpart 156-157.

11 Contrary to the function of messengers and angels in most of the OT texts: cf. Gerstenberger, Boten 139-154.

12 Cf. Schwindt, Weltbilder 3-34.

13 Cf. Koch, Monotheismus 219-233, and, recently, Tuschling, Angels *passim*.

literature in general.¹⁴ With regard to the topic of this examination, all three monographs have one thing in common: They identify, more or less explicitly, the revelatory function of angels in apocalyptic writings with the type of an "*angelus interpres*."¹⁵ Consequently, the revelatory activity of angelic beings becomes generally the chief occupation of angels in ancient Jewish literature. Corresponding to their comprehensive and different functions, angelic revelations are attested in nearly all literary genres among post-exilic writings. Their provenance is connected with the older traditions of the messenger of God (מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה: cf. Gen 16:9-11; Num 22:22-27; Isa 37:36) and related expressions (כְּבוֹד יְהוָה: cf. Exod 16:7, 10; Ezek 43:4, 5; 44:4, or רִוּחַ: cf. 1Kgs 22:21) in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁶

One of the most significant and also ridiculous sceneries that present angelic figures of revelatory functions in a visionary context is the composition of seven night-visions in Zech 1-6.¹⁷ Besides some still unresolved questions concerning the semantics of the metaphors frequently used in the visions (e.g., the man with the measuring cord: 2:5-9, the woman sitting in the Ephah: 5:5-11), the reader finds different terms for angelic beings (מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה, מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים).¹⁸ Most prominent is the מַלְאֲכֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ in Zech 1:9, 13, 14; 2:2, 7; 4:1, 4, 5; 5:5, 10 and 6:4 who discloses the visionary reality to the seer *and* to the audience resp. the reader.¹⁹ The setting of the visions as a whole finds its goal in a universalistic relief and retribution of the Temple in Jerusalem and "Israel" after seventy years of exile and gloominess (cf. Zech 1:12).²⁰ To sum up, it is apparent that the night-visions of Zech 1-6 describe angels and

14 Cf. Schäfer, Rivalität 9-40; Mach, Entwicklungsstadien esp. 142-144, and 114-127, 129, where he lays emphasis on the priestly and heavenly provenance of angels in apocalyptic writings; Dörfel, Engel esp. 24, 255-257.

15 Cf. Schäfer, Rivalität 10: "In ganz besonderer Weise charakteristisch für die Engelvorstellung des nachexilischen Judentums ist der sog. angelus interpres (Deuteengel) oder Engel der Offenbarung."

16 Cf. Seebass, Engel 583-585; Dörfel, Engel 248-249, and the recent overview by Newsom, Angels 248-253.

17 For the sociology of the Zechariah group cf. Cook, Prophecy 153-158.

18 Especially the first vision in Zech 1:8-15 is enigmatic, because of a combination of all three types of angelic beings. For a possible solution cf. Delkurt, Engelwesen 20-41, who reconstructs a "logical" text (cf. Delkurt, Engelwesen 40-41) that is restricted to the מַלְאֲכֵי as *angelus interpres*. More conclusive is Koch's assumption that finds here a hierarchy of angelic beings (see Koch, Monotheismus 220-221).

19 Cf. Delkurt, Engelwesen 31, who translates with NRSV "the angel who talked with me". But the *beth communicationis* has also in mind the addressees of the prophetic message: "the angel who reveals through me [i.e., the seer and prophet]" (cf. Jenni, Präpositionen 164-165).

20 Cf. recently Berner, Jahre 78-84, who assumes that concerning Zech 1 and 7 the epoch of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was meant.

angelic beings in a revelatory function that is, nevertheless, different from settings we find in texts called “apocalypses” in a literary sense.

The only “apocalypse” within the Hebrew Bible is attested in the visionary context of Dan 7-12. Here, the angels appear as figures carrying names.²¹ While Gabriel explains the vision of the he-goat and the ram to the seer (cf. Dan 8:15-16)²² and, also, comes back to interpret Jeremiah’s (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10) re-invention of the seventy years as weeks of years (Dan 9:21, 24-27)²³, the more prominent angel Michael, called “one of the chief princes” (Dan 10:13: **אחד השרים הראשנים**) and “great prince” (Dan 12:1: **השר הגדול**), comes to fight against “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” within the war of patron angels and functions as an eschatological protector and advocate for Israel.²⁴ Both, Gabriel and Michael, appear also in lists of the four resp. seven archangels (cf. 1En 9 and 20).²⁵ In Qumran, a fragmentary text is preserved, called “Words of Michael” in Aramaic (4Q529), wherein Michael’s function is to speak to the angels and to show a vision to Gabriel.²⁶ Only these examples show that in later apocalyptic writings the eschatological function of angels is much more elaborated and not restricted to the responsibility of an *angelus interpretes*.

Another good example for the wide range of revelatory tasks is Uriel’s role within the late Jewish apocalypse of 4 Ezra that dates from the end of the 1st century CE.²⁷ In general, this apocalypse from Roman times reflects on the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in a very

21 Cf. Michael (**מִיכָאֵל**) in Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1 (cf. Jude 9; Rev 12:7) and Gabriel (**גַּבְרִיאֵל**) in Dan 8:16; 9:21 (cf. Luke 1:19, 26). While Gabriel only appears as a heavenly figure in the Book of Daniel, Michael is also attested as a personal name in Num 13:13 (cf. 4QRP^c [4Q365] frag. 32 2); Ezra 8:8 and the Books of Chronicle (cf. 1Chr 5:13-14; 6:25; 7:3; 8:16; 12:21; 27:18; 2Chr 21:2).

22 Gabriel appears in Dan 8:15 as a “man:” **בְּמַרְאֵה-גִבּוֹר**.

23 Cf. Collins, Gabriel 338; Berner, Jahre 19-99.

24 Cf. Collins, Daniel 374, 390; Mach, Michael 570.

25 It is likely that the number of four archangels stems from the four living creatures in Ezek 1: cf. van Henten, Archangel 81; Tuschling, Angels 106-107.

26 Cf. 4Q529 frag. 1 1 + 4-5 (text: Puëch, Qumrân Grotte 4 4; translation follows García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 1061):

1 [...] **מִלִּי בִּרְבֹּעַת דִּי אֲמַר מִיכָאֵל לְמַלְאֲכָיָא** 1 Words of the book which Michael spoke to the angels [...]

4 [...] **חָזַם חֲזִית לְגַבְרִיאֵל מִלְּאֲכָאֵל** 4 There I saw the angel Gabriel [...]

5 [...] **כְּחֹזֵא וְחֲחִיזְתָּה חֲזִיתָ וְאֲמַר לִי דִּ** 5 like the vision and I showed him the vision and he says to me tha[t...].

27 For the dating of 4 Ezra cf. Collins, Imagination 195-196; Becker, Apokalyptisches 317. On the widespread provenance and functions of Uriel see Stone, Fourth Ezra 82-83; Mach, Uriel 885-886.

specific manner.²⁸ While the first three visions try to highlight the “way of the Most High” for the pious ones in a dialogue between Ezra and the *angelus interpretes* Uriel (cf. 4 Ezra 3:31; 4:1-4, 10-11; 5:34)²⁹, in the fourth vision, the so-called Zion vision (cf. 9:26-10:59), “there is a sudden reversal, and Ezra comes to share the angel’s point of view.”³⁰ He sees a woman mourning for the death of her son. It follows the transformation of the woman into a city with massive foundations. And this transformation functions as a turning point in the rather universalistic concept of the whole book.³¹ Ezra, as the visionary angel, asks in 4 Ezra 10:28:

Where is the angel Uriel, who came to me at first? For it was he who brought me into this overpowering bewilderment; my end has become corruption, and my prayer a reproach.³²

In the ensuing interpretation of the vision Uriel explains, again as the *angelus interpretes*, that Ezra has seen many secrets from the Most High (cf. 10:38). Furthermore, the woman resp. the city stands for the new and heavenly Jerusalem in the brightness of her glory and the loveliness of her beauty (cf. 10:50). To sum up: Uriel’s interpretations of the vision are highly significant. And what is more, Ezra and Uriel reversed their rôles in the central fourth Zion vision. Therefore, it cannot be denied that also Uriel’s function as an angel of revelation in 4 Ezra covers more than the role of a mediator or an interpreter of the apocalyptic message. The angel becomes part of the apocalyptic message.

3. Angelic Revelation in the Book of Watchers

Another interesting aspect of revelations mediated by angelic beings stems from the behavior of the Watchers in 1En 6-11. These chapters are part of the “Book of Watchers” (1En 1-36) that formed, together with the “Astronomical Book” (1En 72-82), the most ancient parts of the composite work of 1 En, as entirely preserved only in Ethiopic, but also

28 Schmid, Zerstörung 183-206, characterizes the way in which 4 Ezra interpreted the destruction of the Temple with the term “Heilsparadox.” Schmid considers the inclusion of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE into a doctrine of salvation as unique in Jewish tradition (cf. also Becker, Apokalyptisches 328).

29 Cf. Becker, Apokalyptisches 332.

30 Collins, Imagination 199 (cf. also Becker, Apokalyptisches 336).

31 For the strategy and meaning of this concept see Beyerle, Richter 315-337; Becker, Apokalyptisches 324-341.

32 Translation: Stone, Ezra 326. The Latin text reads: *Ubi est Urihel angelus, qui a principio venit ad me? Quoniam ipse me fecit venire in multitudinem excessus mentis huius, et factus est finis meus in corruptionem et oratio mea in inproperium.*

found among the Aramaic fragments from Qumran most of which date from the end of the 3rd or the first half of the 2nd century BCE (cf. 4QEn^a ar [4Q201] and 4QEn^b ar [4Q202]).³³ The “Book of Watchers” consists of three main sections: chaps. 1-5: a universal judgment with a theophany at the beginning, chaps. 6-16: the fall of the Watchers and Enoch’s function as prophet of judgment, chaps. 17-36: the cosmic journeys of Enoch.³⁴ Especially 1En 6-11, the revolt of the heavenly Watchers, is of special interest here. These chapters speak of the revolt of the Watchers to corrupt the world and lead to the divine judgment. At least two versions are apparent: the Shemihazah story explains the evil inclination by means of the sexual defilement of the Watchers with women (cf. also Gen 6:1-4), while the ‘Asa’el tradition uses the motif of improper instruction to humanity. The date, provenance, religio-historical influence and literary composition of chaps. 6-11 within the “Book of Watchers” are still a matter of scholarly dispute.³⁵ Leaving this ongoing discussion aside, it is very probable that 1En 6-11 collects traditions that generally predate the Enochic compositions from Hellenistic times as they are also represented in the remaining chapters of the “Book of Watchers.”³⁶ The most convincing argument for taking the composition of Shemihazah and ‘Asa’el as an independent unit is the remarkable fact that the name of Enoch is missing in 1En 6-11.³⁷

Martha Himmelfarb and Annette Y. Reed recently observed a significant reservation in later re-interpretations of the fall of the Watchers when it comes to the motif of the revelation of heavenly secrets as it is

33 The date of the fragments from Qumran, elaborated by J.T. Milik, are widely accepted: cf. Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 9-10.

34 Cf. Collins, *Imagination* 47. See VanderKam, *Enoch* 25, who also distinguishes 1En 6-11; 12-16 and two cosmic journeys in chaps. 17-19; 20-36.

35 E.g., Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 169-171, finds in the violence connected with the giants, the result of the defilement in the Shemihazah story, a reflection on the wars of the Diadochi (323-302 BCE) and puts the tradition in the 4th century BCE. He also argues for a secondary insertion of the ‘Asa’el material (cf. Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 165, 172, 190) and writes (191): “These various stages of expansion or interpolation took place some time between the creation of the Shemihazah myth (ca. 300 B.C.E. or earlier) and our earliest evidence for the present full text (ca. 165 B.C.E.)” — see also the critique of Collins, *Imagination* 49-51, and Reed, *Ascent* 50-53. For the differing literary models within the history of scholarship cf. recently Wright, *Origin* 29-37.

36 Wright, *Origin* 37, summarizes his history of scholarship as follows: “As can be understood from the above presentation, no consensus can be reached about the origin of the Fallen Angel tradition in BW [“Book of Watchers”, SB], except that it was not original to the author.”

37 Nevertheless, Enoch holds a central role within the judgment of the Watchers that follows in chaps. 12-16. For the importance of the motif of angelic instructions in both, chaps. 6-11 and 12-16: cf. Reed, *Ascent* 54-66.

connected with 'Asa'el³⁸ in 1En 6-11.³⁹ A good case in point is the early reception of the Watchers' story in the Book of Jubilees (ca. 150 BCE).⁴⁰ Both strands from 1En 6-11, the Shemihazah and 'Asa'el tradition, appear, e.g., in Jub 4. But while the sexual defilement of the Watchers is retold in Jub 4:22, the revelation motif is quoted, *pace* 1En 6-11, in a rather positive attitude (Jub 4:15):⁴¹

Jub 4:22: He [Enoch, SB] testified to the Watchers who had sinned with the daughters of men because they had begun to mix with earthly women so that they became defiled. Enoch testified against all of them.

Jub 4:15: [...] He [Malakel, SB] named him Jared, because during his lifetime the angels of the Lord who were called Watchers descended to earth to teach mankind and to do what is just and upright upon the earth.

The text of Jub 4:15, a re-interpretation of Gen 5:15, explains the Hebrew name Jared with the verbal root ירד ("to descend") and the additional hint to the Watchers' descent in order to provide knowledge (cf. also 1En 6:6). This knowledge is qualified positively as "what is just and upright upon earth." Contrary to that, the 'Asa'el-story in 1En 6-11 emphasizes the negative results of 'Asa'el's teaching. In a petitionary prayer of the four archangels, Michael, Sariel, Raphael and Gabriel mourn about 'Asa'el's misdeeds (1En 9:6):⁴²

You see what Asael has done,
who has told all iniquity upon the earth,
and has revealed the eternal mysteries that are in heaven,⁴³
which the sons of men were striving to learn.

In the context of chap. 9 two types of angels and angelic functions appear in one and the same section of the story: the Watcher 'Asa'el as revealer of heavenly secrets (cf. also 1En 8:1; 10:7) and the four archangels as mediators or intercessors⁴⁴. While the latter angels play their

38 On the name and different forms like 'Asa'el, 'Asa'sel or 'Asas'el cf. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him* 109-111.

39 Cf. Himmelfarb, *Ascent* 77-78: "Thus knowledge of the very phenomena that are signs of faithfulness in the introduction to the Book of the Watchers and cause for praise of God in the tour to the ends of the earth here contributes to the corruption of humanity. The negative attitude of this strand of the story of the fall of the Watchers is quite isolated in apocalyptic literature." See also Reed, *Angels passim*.

40 On the content and date of Jub cf. the short and comprehensive introduction in VanderKam, *Introduction* 97-100; cf. also Berner, *Jahre* 234-238.

41 For the following translation cf. van Ruiten, *History* 153, 162. For the interpretation cf. van Ruiten, *History* 159-160, and Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 195-196.

42 The translation follows Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 202, 204, who also discusses the text.

43 The Greek texts preserved: καὶ ἐδῆλωσεν τὰ μυστήρια τοῦ αἰῶνος τὰ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (Codex Panopolitanus) and ἐδίδαξεν γὰρ τὰ μυστήρια καὶ ἀπεκάλυψε τῷ αἰῶνι τὰ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (Greek Syncellus).

44 Cf. Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 206, and the "Excursus" 208-210.

part as intercessors before the "Most High" for the benefit of mankind in a corrupted world (1En 9:1-3; cf. 7:6; 8:4),⁴⁵ 'Asa'el's instructions are the reason for the godlessness on earth.⁴⁶ As 1En 8:1-2 states:⁴⁷

¹ Asael taught men to make swords of iron and weapons and shields and breastplates and every instrument of war. He showed them metals of the earth and how they should work gold to fashion it suitably, and concerning silver, to fashion it for bracelets and ornaments for women. And he showed them concerning antimony and eye paint and all manner of precious stones and dyes. And the sons of men made them for themselves and for their daughters, and they transgressed and led astray the holy ones.² And there was much godlessness upon the earth, and they made their ways desolate.

Here, it is clearly underlined that 'Asa'el's instructions to humanity, embracing metallurgy, mining, cosmetics and fabrication of artifacts caused the desolation upon earth.⁴⁸ Another decisive difference between the archangels and the Watchers is indicated from their relation to God. On the one hand, the archangels appear as mediators between mankind and God.⁴⁹ On the other hand, 'Asa'el never acts as an angelic being which was legitimized by the divine power. All in all, the instruction motif, in various connections a central indication of apocalyptic literature that was positively connoted, becomes disavowed in the 'Asa'el tradition. And this is obviously caused by a missing divine au-

45 Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 205, 207, speaks of the archangels as "God's eyes on the world."

46 The latter re-interpretation of the myth in 1En 12-16 (cf. Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 229-230, who assumes a date in the first half of the 3rd century BCE) affirms the adequate role of the Watchers in terms of intercession and petition for mankind, as it characterizes the archangels in 1En 9:1-11. E.g., 1En 15:2 calls upon Enoch (translation by Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 267): "Go and say to the watchers of heaven, who sent you to petition in their behalf, 'You should petition in behalf of men, and not men in behalf of you.'"

47 For the translation and the discussion of the text see Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 188-189. See also Bhayro, *Narrative* 146-149, who finds in the elaborated text of the Greek Syncellus a later literary stage of the "Book of Watchers" that was already influenced by the Watchers' story from Jub 4-5, what is highly hypothetical. A further problem stems from the question of the religio-historical background that formed 1En 8:1. The scholarly debate discusses mythological elements from the ANE and from the Greek world (especially the Prometheus myth). E.g., Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 191-193, comes to the conclusion that the Prometheus myth provides the closest parallel to the 'Asa'el material. Consequently, the Greek traditions could have formed "a bridge between 1En and the old Semitic traditions." (so Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 1 193; see also Wright, *Origin* 115-117)

48 Cf. also Wright, *Origin* 105: "This [i.e. 1En 8:2, SB] clearly describes the corruption of humanity due to the teachings of the angels."

49 This is also emphasized in 1En 9:4-5, wherein the archangels invoke upon the "God of gods" who is predicated as king and creator.

thorization. As in several other instances, God functions as a distinctive feature in the dualistic world of apocalypses.⁵⁰

Textual evidence for an angelic revelation that implies divine sanction is preserved at the end of the story of the fall of the Watchers (1En 10:1-11:2). In 1En 9:6, 'Asa'el's revelations are characterized by two verbs: "to show" and "to teach" (see above). The Greek texts read forms of δηλόω and διδάσκω (cf. also 7:1). Strikingly the same verbs are used in 1En 10:2-3, where the angel Uriel – or Sariel⁵¹ – is commissioned to instruct Noah.⁵² Therefore, text and context in 1En 6-11 underline that the question of divine legitimacy is crucial, when it comes to distinguish between revelation as the cause for the corruption of the earth ('Asa'el) and revelation as a positive sign of the end-times (archangels). Consequently, it is suitable to speak of a "*theocentric*" argument.

So far, the observation by Martha Himmelfarb and Annette Y. Reed about a restrictive use of the instruction or revelation motif with negative associations (see above) seems correct. In this study, we, nevertheless, followed only the path of re-interpretation in the early Jewish literature, wherein the Book of Jubilees provides the most important account of a retelling of the fall of the Watchers.⁵³ And besides the quotations from Enoch's vision (Jub 4:15, 22), already discussed above, some other verses that refer to the flood (cf. Jub 5:1-10; 7:20-25; 10:1-7) and Jub 8:3 should be taken under consideration.⁵⁴ The only passage in Jub 5:1-10 which could be suspected of being dependent on the 'Asa'el story in 1En 9-11 is the quotation of Gen 6:5b in Jub 5:2. Here, it is stated that every thought of the heart (Gen 6:5: *ובל ייצר מחשבת לבו*) was only evil among mankind.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the text of Jub 5 combines the flood with the fall of the Watchers (cf. also CD 2:14-21; T. Naph 3:5).⁵⁶ The deluge is interpreted as judgment against the Watchers who married the daughters of the children of men and begot giants (Jub 5:1).

50 For the crucial role of God in ancient Jewish apocalypticism cf. Beyerle, *Gottesvorstellungen passim*.

51 On the discussion about the original name cf. Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 216 n. 10:1^c.

52 Cf. the observations by Molenberg, *Study* 140-141, 145. Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 184, contends that the motif of instruction is secondary.

53 Further evidence is attested in some traditions preserved in the Qumran texts. For the data cf. Reed, *Angels passim*. See also the references collected by D. Dimant and quoted by Wright, *Origin* 35 n. 123, and Bhayro, *Narrative* 12 n. 6.

54 See also the survey provided by Nickelsburg, *Enoch* 72-73, and the detailed discussion in VanderKam, *Traditions* 318-326. It is not the aim of this study to decide whether Jub is literary dependent on 1En (cf. VanderKam, *Enoch* 110-121, and *Response* 163-164) or goes back to traditions that were common also to the Enochic material (cf. van Ruiten, *Dependency* 90-93).

55 Especially Kugel, *Traditions* 201-203, connects this motif with the Watchers' myth.

56 Cf. van Ruiten, *History* 195-196.

While Jub 7:20-25 is part of the instruction that Noah has provided for his children and grandchildren⁵⁷, Jub 10:1-7 refers to the "spirits," the children of the Watchers, and the acts of the Watchers in general (v. 5). At last, Jub 8:3 is of more interest:⁵⁸

He [Kainan, SB] found an inscription[,] which the ancients had incised in a rock. He read what was in it, copied it, and sinned on the basis of what was in it, since it was the Watchers' teaching by which they used to observe the omens of the sun, moon, and stars, and every heavenly sign.

As the Watchers' teaching connected with sin and the sexual defilement with women is not mentioned in Jub 8, this text seems to contradict the observation of Himmelfarb and Reed. Recently, Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar finds in the Book of Jubilees a mainly restricted and much less harsh view on the negative allusions associated with the teachings of the Watchers in 1En 6-16.⁵⁹ One can go beyond this statement, if the reference of Jub 8:3 in 1En 8:3 is taken into account. In general, the passage from the "Book of Watchers" criticizes angelic teachings, but of a different kind compared to what 'Asa'el's teaching (cf. 1En 8:1) was about. It is because Jub 8:3 and 1En 8:3 coincide, when they refer to magic, magical arts and divination resp. astrology⁶⁰ instead of referring to metallurgy, mining, cosmetics and fabrication of artifacts as in 1En 8:1 (see above).⁶¹ Most scholars agree, therefore, that 1En 8:1 and v. 3 stem from different literary strata.⁶² George W.E. Nickelsburg has reconstructed the following text of 1En 8:3:⁶³

Shemihazah taught [Aram. 𐤔𐤌𐤇𐤁𐤀, SB] spells and the cutting of roots.
 Hermani taught sorcery for the loosing of spells and magic and skill.
 Baraqel taught the signs of the lightning flashes.
 Kokabel taught the signs of the stars.

57 See van Ruiten, History 293, referring to v. 20: "It looks somewhat as though Noah took over this task from the Watchers."

58 Translation: van Ruiten, History 314. While the whole section of Jub 8:1-7b can be considered a rewriting of Gen 11:10-15, the story of Kainan in Jub 8:1-4 has no counterpart in the Book of Genesis (cf. the discussion of the text in van Ruiten, History 313-318).

59 See Tigchelaar, Jubilees 101, but cf. also VanderKam, Response 165.

60 Cf. also 1En 7:1; 9:8 and Nickelsburg, Enoch 184, 213.

61 For a very detailed discussion of 1En 8:3 see Nickelsburg, Enoch 197-201.

62 Another reason for a literary distinction in 1En 8 can be found in the first position of Shemihazah among "the names of their chiefs" in 1En 6:7 and 8:3 (cf. Greek Syncellus), while 'Asa'el is missing in 8:3 and in the tenth position in 6:7. Contrary to that, 'Asa'el is mentioned first in 8:1. Cf., e.g., recently Bhayro, Narrative 13-18, 246-247; Nickelsburg, Enoch 190-191.

63 Nickelsburg, Enoch 188. Besides the Eth. Mss. also Aram. (4QEn^a ar, 4QEn^b ar) and Greek witnesses came to us. The text is discussed in Nickelsburg, Enoch 189, and Bhayro, Narrative 152-156.

Ziqel taught the signs of the shooting stars.

Arteqoph taught the signs of the earth.

Shamsiel taught the signs of the sun.

Sahriel taught the signs of the moon.

And they all began to reveal mysteries [Aram.: גלֵה רִז, SB] to their wives and to their children.

Despite the fact that also 'Asa'el "revealed the eternal mysteries that are in heaven" (1En 9:6; see above), in the passage quoted above the eight of twenty "chiefs" (Aram. רבִּין, Greek ἀρχων) or "dekadarchs" (cf. 1En 6:7) are listed. Their teachings comprise sorcery and astrology, and at the end of the passage all of this is summarized as a revelation of mysteries (1En 8:3; 4QEn^a ar [4Q201] col. iv 5 and 4QEn^b ar [4Q202] col. iii 5: (לגלֵה רִזִּין).⁶⁴ Obviously, the "Book of Watchers" transmitted different strands that preserved different contents of what is meant, if a "revelation of mysteries" has negative consequences. Furthermore, "the omens of the sun, moon, and stars, and every heavenly sign" in Jub 8:3 refer to the teaching of the "dekadarchs" and not to the 'Asa'el story. The teachings of those "chiefs" materialize the otherwise positively connoted revelations⁶⁵ in the direction of divination and astrology.

A reason why the Book of Jubilees refers to this aspect of a negative teaching is hard to provide, because of the very complex shape of literary strata within 1En 6-11 (see above). But 1En 8:3 was probably a later insertion into the Shemihazah story and also of independent provenance compared to the Shemihazah and 'Asa'el stories.⁶⁶ Besides this – highly hypothetical – literary solution, another parallel between Jub and 1En is apparent: Both compositions criticize divination and astrology as they were practiced and revealed to humans by Watchers or angelic beings related to them.⁶⁷ On the other hand both texts also refer to astrology in a positive way. And both, Jub and 1 En, connect astrological knowledge with the figure of Enoch.⁶⁸ Again, angelic revelation appears to be ambiguous in apocalyptic writings. And, as with the 'Asa'el story, the "theocentric" argument is decisive here (see above). As 4Q536 frag. 2 col. i 8 has it:⁶⁹

יגלֵה רִזִּין בעלֵי יוֹנִין [...]

[...] he will reveal mysteries like the Most High Ones

64 For the text cf. García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 402, 406.

65 Cf. Dan 2:28-29, 47; 1QH^a 9:21; 4Q536 frag. 1 col. i 8; 1En 16:3; 61:5; 106:19; 2 Bar 48:3; 3 Bar 1:6, 8; 2:5; T. Levi 2:10; Sib Or 3:812.

66 Cf. Nickelsburg, Enoch 190-191; Bhayro, Narrative 11-20.

67 See van Ruiten, History 317-318.

68 Cf. Jub 4:17-26; 1En 72-82 and VanderKam, Enoch 17-25.111-118; van Ruiten, History 160-166.

69 Text: Puëch, Qumrân Grotte 4 165; translation: García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 1073.

Consequently, if the revelation is not legitimized from God or a divine being, it causes defilement and ravages on earth. This is also true of astrological insights. And it seems probable that the Book of Jubilees referred to 1En 8:3, simply because Jub 4:17-26 and Enoch's familiarity with astrology could work as a counterpart to the Watchers' myth.⁷⁰ But not only the message of the angelic revelation shows ambiguities. Also the subjects of divulgence, the Watchers as angelic beings, associate positive and negative acts and attitudes.⁷¹ It has been recognized for a long time that the Shemihazah story in 1En 6-11 has re-interpreted the neutral report of descent of the sons of God in Gen 6:1-4 as a negative event.⁷² Lately, the telling of the Watchers' story concerning the revelation of knowledge, in a positive and negative mood, provides another analogy. Nevertheless, the difference is that this strand has no clear biblical or "canonical" sources.

To round off the discussion about the Watchers' revelation we finally have to consider the idea of monotheism, generally presupposed in the apocalyptic traditions. Nevertheless, Jews and Christians discussed the problematic relation between monotheism and angelology from ancient times onward. For instance, it is still a matter of scholarly debate how Jewish angelology influenced the early Christian doctrine

70 In this case, Tigchelaar's thesis of a less harsh view on the negative allusions associated with the teachings of the Watchers in the Book of Jubilees (see above) is rather unsatisfactory.

71 For a positive characterization of the Watchers cf. in Aramaic: Dan 4:10, 14, 20; 1QapGen ar 6:13-15; 1En 12:2-3 (4QEn^c ar [4Q204] col. v 19: וְנִרְאוּ עֲנִיָּוִם ...); 22:6 (4QEn^c ar [4Q206] frag. 2 col. ii 5: וְקִדְשָׁם לְעִירָא [לְרַפָּא]); 93:2 (4QEn^s ar [4Q212] col. iii 21: חֲנוּךְ אֱהֻיָּתָא מִמֶּנּוּ עִירִין וְקִדְשִׁין) and in Hebrew: Jub 4:15; for a negative characterization and function see, besides the texts in Jub and 1En already mentioned, in Aramaic: 1En 13:10 (4QEn^c ar [4Q204] col. vi 8: וְמוֹכַח לְעִירִי שְׁמִיָּא), in Hebrew: CD 2:18, and in Greek: T. Reu 5:6-7; T. Naph 3:5. If the conjecture וְעִירִי in 4QVisions of Amram^b ar [4Q544] frag. 2 2 by J.T. Milik can be accepted (cf. Puëch, Qumrân Grotte 4 326-327; García Martínez / Tigchelaar, Dead Sea 1088), then 4Q544 frag. 1 10-14 distinguishes between good and evil Watchers (so Tuschling, Angels 89 n. 377). Both categories of Watchers are intermingled within the concept of seven heavens in 2 En (see 2 En 17:3; 18:3, 7-8 and Böttrich, Weltweisheit 149-153 with 152 n. 28). Recently, Bhayro, Narrative 21-25, challenged the identification of עִיר with angelic beings. This identification is only true, so Bhayro, since the LXX of Dan 4 read עִיר וְקִדְשִׁי as a ἐνδοξαστοῦ influenced by 1En 6-11. Originally, the Babylonian setting of Dan 4 calls for a connection between עִיר ("being awake / watchful") and the Akkadian root *barû* ("to watch over") that signifies also the Babylonian diviner who was engaged in haruspexology. And קִדְשִׁי referred to the "holy ones", i.e. the priests who received the omens. This derivation is very unlikely, because neither the distinction of עִיר and קִדְשִׁי nor the connection of עִיר with Babylonian extispicy is attested within Jewish literature about the Watchers. For the "classical" interpretation see recently Nickelsburg, Enoch 140-141; Collins, Watcher 893-894; Tuschling, Angels 89-91.

72 Cf. Bhayro, Narrative 25 with n. 15.

of Christology.⁷³ But most scholars generally agree that the developed veneration of one God did not contradict the elaboration of angelologies in ancient Judaism.⁷⁴ Both developments sometimes caused mutual influence. But in various ways they evolved independently. What is more, ancient Jewish angelology denies nearly all clear-cut differentiation and categorization. Only very rough classifications are possible. For example, while in the early period angels act mainly on earth mediating divine messages, since the 2nd century BCE, their place is in heaven to praise God and conduct war in the heavenly sphere.⁷⁵ Good cases in point are the "Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice" from Qumran and Dan 10-12. The stories about the fall of the Watchers refer to the earlier *and* to the later tradition. The revelation of heavenly secrets, even if it is not for good, recalls the mediatory function of the angelic beings. On the other hand, the Watchers' descent alludes to the heavenly realm as their dwelling place. What is important here is the proximity of angels, even of the Watchers, to God. And this proximity never challenged God's incontestable autocracy.

4. Conclusions

The topic of angelic revelation touches a core problem of apocalypses and apocalyptic literature in ancient Judaism. Consequently, angels that appear in a revelatory or visionary context figure large in the apocalyptic worldview. Not only in their role as *angelus interpres* they disclose a new reality that is radically distinguished from and wholly incomparable to those realities which the ancient tradition's contemporaries became aware of. The angel of revelation, as mediator between heaven and earth, personalizes in some way the cosmic reference quantity of apocalyptic texts. In an apocalyptic scheme both heaven and earth are concerned.

Even a cursory survey of angelic revelations in Second Temple Judaism shows that it is unsatisfactory to confine the acts of angels to their hermeneutical function, e.g., to "translate" visions. In short, angelic revelation embraces more than speeches to remedy the "*horror vacui*" of the visionary. Sometimes angels become part of the vision of

73 Cf. Vollenweider, *Monotheismus* 22-23; Schrage, *Einzigkeit* 91-184; Tuschling, *Angels* 5-7.

74 E.g., Vollenweider, *Monotheismus* 40, states: "Die Herausbildung des Monotheismus Israels geht mit der Ausbildung angelogischer Konzeptionen einher." Both strands, monotheism and angelology, meet, e.g., in a text found at Qumran: 4Q377 frag. 1 col. ii 7-12 (cf. VanderKam / Brady, *Pentateuch* 213-216; Orlov, *Moses* 168).

75 Cf. Tuschling, *Angels* 108.

the End, as in 4 Ezra. Sometimes angelic revelation denotes rather a certain behavior or attitude than an interpretation of portents of the end, as the Shemihazah story in 1En 6-11.

One of the most interesting questions is: What happens, if angelic revelation is explicitly not determined to supply eschatological hope, but to provoke evil within the course of the world? Here, the 'Asa'el story in the "Book of Watchers" and its early retelling in the Book of Jubilees are significant. For several reasons (see above), the negative implications of angelic divulgation are caused by the angel's renunciation of God. Consequently, not only the pictures of hope for a salutary end-time but also those metaphors of distress and evil inclination can be couched into acts of angelic revelations. Furthermore, the "*theocentric*" interpretation makes it possible to place angels in the surroundings of God. As Harold Bloom puts it:⁷⁶

Whether we interpret them as God's messengers, or his warriors, or even his administrators, angels are meaningless apart from God, even when they are in rebellion against him. Palpable as this is, we are wise to keep reminding ourselves of it. To an atheist or skeptic, angels can have no reality, and yet the best modern American poet[s], the unbelieving Wallace Stevens, invokes what he calls 'the angel of reality' in his work.

To speak as a historian, one does not have to be a "skeptic" to find all those angels beyond the "real world" that denied their divine realm.

Abstract

The article discusses different concepts of angelic revelation in Second Temple Judaism. First, angelic revelation is closely related to apocalyptic writings. No matter how an "apocalypse" should be defined, the disclosure of heavenly secrets denotes a key figure in apocalyptic thinking. After a survey of functions of angelic revelations in ancient Jewish apocalyptic literature follows a detailed discussion of the fall of the Watchers in 1En 6-11. Here, the study concentrates on the 'Asa'el story, wherein the revelation of heavenly knowledge is determined as an act of evil. The discussion of texts in the "Book of Watchers" and the Book of Jubilees leads to the conclusion that angelic revelation is in need of a divine legitimation. Finally, this so-called "theocentric" argument is connected with the problem of monotheism.

76 Bloom, *Omens* 74-75.

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III.

